REMARKS

Claims 1-15 and 17-22 are presented for further examination. Claims 1, 7, and 12 have been amended.

In the final Office Action dated March 24, 2004, the Examiner rejected claims 1-4, 7, 9-12, 14, 15, and 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,034,958 ("Wicklund"). Remarks accompanying this rejection state: "Since the claim has not defined how the bits are predefined within the address or how the packing circuits suppresses data within the address differently from hashing function, the Examiner believes that the claim is not patentably distinct from the Wicklund reference." The Examiner further states: "Since the claim has not defined how the predetermined bits are suppressed using the packing function, or how the bit positions in the check word correspond to the predetermined positions, the Examiner believes that rejection is proper."

Claims 5, 6, 8, 13, and 18 were found to be allowable if rewritten into independent form, and claims 19-22 were found to be allowable.

Applicant has amended claim 1 to clarify that the check words are equal to a first set of bits having first predetermined positions in the desired address. In addition, claim 1 has been clarified to recite that the operation of the packing function is to provide a packed address equal to a second set of bits having second predetermined positions in the current address, the first and second predetermined positions being distinct. In view of these amendments, applicant believes claim 1 is now clearly distinguishable over Wicklund. More particularly, Wicklund describes at column 5, lines 40-42, a hash-coding block 204 generating a 14-bit hash-code from a 33-bit PHY/VPI/VCI combination by dividing it by a 14-bit polynomial. The hash-coding block of Wicklund cannot be compared to the "packing circuit for receiving a current address and for providing a packed address equal to a second set of bits having second predetermined positions in the current address" because the division of a 33-bit sequence by a polynomial of degree 14 is not a set of bits from the sequence, let alone of predetermined positions.

The foregoing can be quickly demonstrated or shown. If, for example, the 33-bit PHY/VPI/VCI address equals only one "1" followed by 32 "0", its division by the polynomial

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$x^{14}+x^{13}+x^{11}+x^9+1$ used by Wicklund contains more than one "1" and can thus not be compared to a set of bits from the PHY/VPI/VCI address. Also, if the 33-bit PHY/VPI/VCI address comprises no "0" (a sequence of 33 "1"), its division by the polynomial $x^{14}+x^{13}+x^{11}+x^9+1$ contains more than one "0" and can thus not be compared to a set of bits from the PHY/VPI/VCI address.

Not only can it be argued that the hash-coding block of Wicklund is very different from the packing circuit of the invention, it can even be argued that Wicklund, by using such a complex combination as a polynomial division of the bits of a current address, teaches away one skilled in the art from providing a packed address simply "equal to a second set of bits having second predetermined positions in the current address, said first and second predetermined positions being distinct."

In view of all of the foregoing, applicant submits that claim 1 and dependent claims 2-6 are clearly allowable over Wicklund.

Independent claim 7 contains limitations similar to those added to claim 1, as does independent method claim 12. In view of the foregoing arguments with respect to claim 1, applicant submits that claims 7-15 and 17-22 are all allowable.
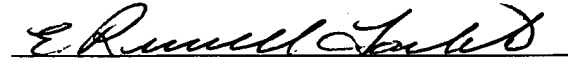
In the event the Examiner disagrees with the foregoing or finds minor informalities that can be resolved by telephone conference, the Examiner is urged to contact applicant's undersigned representative by telephone at (206) 622-4900 in order to expeditiously resolve prosecution of this application. Consequently, early and favorable action allowing these claims and passing this case to issuance is respectfully solicited.

The Director is authorized to charge any additional fees due by way of this Amendment, or credit any overpayment, to our Deposit Account No. 19-1090.

Respectfully submitted,

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